Reading 16B

THE HOLOCAUST AND WORLD WAR II

The Holocaust was not the same as World War II. Hitler's first goal was to acquire "*Lebensraum,*" or living space. His second goal was to make Germany "*Judenrein,*" or clean of Jews. Hitler gained *Lebensraum* when the Third *Reich* expanded beyond Germany and throughout Europe in World War II. He also gained control of millions of Jews.

Mass murder became Hitler's goal because it became a possible "solution" to the question of how to get rid of the Jews.

The murder of the Jews could occur because during World War II the Germans occupied all of Europe. They, therefore, gained the freedom to do as they wished to 3,350,000 Jews in Poland, 600,000 Jews in Hungary, 765,000 Jews in Roumania, 90,000 Jews in Slovakia, 140,000 in Holland and 2 million in the Soviet Union. They also controlled the fate of the Jews of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Norway, Greece and such remote places as the islands of Crete and Rhodes. (see map)

Thus, the two events, the Holocaust and World War II, converged *geographically*, but in all other respects should not be confused. For example, there were no military or political reasons to annihilate the Jews. In fact, it was a military burden for the Germans to take so many man and trains away from the war effort in order to carry out the "Final Solution."

The official position of each Allied government (Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States) was to offer assistance to active political and/or military opponents of the Germans. This must be understood in order to grasp the policy pursued by the Allies regarding the murder of the Jews.

- The Jews were not a nation
- The Jews were not a political force or political party
- The Jews were not a unified armed enemy of Germany

Therefore, the Allies did not help rescue the Jews.